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Claims 1 – 12 (cancelled)

1. ¹⁵ (amended) A method for preparing an endothermic heat shield composition, which comprises at least 50 wt/wt% hydrated salt and at least one filler material, said method comprising:

- a) heating the hydrated salt to a temperature at which it liquefies;
- b) adding and mixing at least one filler material into a); and cooling the mixture to form a composition wherein the hydrated salt particles are fused to each other, with the proviso that said at least one filler material is a mixture of organic and inorganic materials.

2. ¹⁶ (original) The method according to claim ¹⁵, wherein said hydrated salt is selected from the group consisting of $\text{Al}_2(\text{SO}_4)_3 \cdot 16\text{H}_2\text{O}$; $\text{NH}_4\text{Fe}(\text{SO}_4)_2 \cdot 12\text{H}_2\text{O}$; $\text{Na}_2\text{B}_4\text{O}_7 \cdot 10\text{H}_2\text{O}$; $\text{NaAl}(\text{SO}_4)_2 \cdot 12\text{H}_2\text{O}$; $\text{Al}(\text{NH}_4)_2(\text{SO}_4)_2 \cdot 12\text{H}_2\text{O}$; $\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4 \cdot 10\text{H}_2\text{O}$; $\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$; $(\text{NH}_4)_2\text{SO}_4 \cdot 12\text{H}_2\text{O}$; $\text{KAl}(\text{SO}_4)_2 \cdot 12\text{H}_2\text{O}$; $\text{Na}_2\text{SiO}_3 \cdot 9\text{H}_2\text{O}$; $\text{Mg}(\text{NO}_3)_2 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$; NaNO_2 ; $\text{Na}_2\text{CO}_3 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$; and mixtures thereof.

3. ¹⁶ (original) The method according to claim ¹⁵, wherein at least 50% of said salt is hydrate aluminum sulfate.

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Claim 16 (cancelled)

Claims 17 - 25

¹⁰ 17. (original) The method according to claim ¹⁵ ~~16~~, wherein said organic component is a solid cellulose-based component.

¹¹ 18. (original) The method according to claim ¹⁷ ~~16~~, wherein said

solid cellulose-based component is selected from the group consisting of wood particles and paper particles.

¹² 19. (original) The method according to claim ¹⁷ ~~16~~, wherein said solid cellulose-based component is present in an amount ranging from about 5 wt/wt% to 30 wt/wt%.

⁴ 20. (withdrawn from consideration) A method according to claim ¹⁰ ~~16~~ wherein said organic component includes sugar molasses which is present in an amount of up to 20 wt/wt%.

⁵ 21. (original) A method according to claim ¹⁷ ~~16~~, wherein said inorganic component is selected from the group consisting of glass fibers and ceramic fibers which is present in an amount of up to 10 wt/wt%.

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⁷^{24.} (original) The method according to claim ¹³, wherein said inorganic component is inert, highly porous and light weight.

⁷^{25.} (withdrawn from consideration) The method according to claim ¹⁴, wherein said inorganic component is selected from the group consisting of Vermiculite and Perlite and is present in an amount ranging from about 5 wt/wt to 30 wt/wt.

⁸^{26.} (original) The method according to claim ¹⁵, further comprising the step of adding up to 10 wt/wt water to the hydrated salt prior to heating.

⁹^{26.} (withdrawn from consideration) The method according to claim ¹⁵, wherein inorganic component is present in an amount of up to 10 wt/wt and it is selected from the group consisting of titanium dioxide, magnesium oxide, aluminum oxide, and mixtures thereof.